

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 E. Main Street
Canon City, CO 81212**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-F02-2014-011 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Recreation SRP- Events in Buena Vista

PLANNING UNIT: Arkansas River Sub-region # 1

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Chaffee County, 6th P.M.
T. 13 S., R. 78 W., Sec 32, 33
T. 14 S., R. 78 W., Sec 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 23.
T. 15 S., R. 78 W., Sec 12

APPLICANT: Kathryn Wadsworth, Town of Buena Vista

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The applicant identified above has applied for a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to hold events in the Fourmile Travel Management Area and the Midland Trail System. Historically, the applicant has held permits for four events. The events include a commercially guided all-terrain vehicle (ATV) tour, a competitive pack burro race, a running race, and mountain bike race. The Proposed Action would issue an SRP for these four events and up to three additional running or biking events. The SRP would be issued for up to five years.

Commercial guided ATV Fall Color Tour: Fourmile Travel Management Area

The Proposed Action would renew a commercially guided ATV tour on designated routes in the Fourmile Travel Management Area (See Map 1 and 2). This day-use event is held for four, mid-week days, at the end of September. There will be a maximum of 225 total participants, which will break into smaller groups of no more than 50. The groups meet at trailheads and disperse throughout motorized designated trails that include United States Forest Service routes. The event organizer will provide directions and maps to ensure participants stay on designated roads and trails. Historically, this permit has registered 105-165 participants, compiled from historical records from 2009-2013.

Parking and staging will occur on BLM sites. Fueling will be accomplished on private land, and will not occur on BLM land.

The safety plan assigns outriders to each group who are equipped with a radio and first aid kit. Outriders will serve as a contact for Chaffee dispatch if needed. Chaffee County Search and Rescue (SAR) may also be utilized. Buena Vista Fall Color Tour maintained an acceptable performance record for guided ATV tours in Fourmile for more than 5 years.

Competitive/ Commercial Non-Motorized Events; Mountain Biking and Running and Pack Burro Race: Fourmile Travel Management Area

The Proposed Action would issue a SRP for six commercial or competitive non-motorized events. The SRP will utilize the Fourmile Travel Management Area, with the following limitations:

1. Event dates would be scheduled in shoulder seasons and submitted to the BLM by December 1 annually for approval.
2. No events would be scheduled in June or July, and only one event scheduled in August. The events will occur sporadically throughout the remaining calendar year.
3. Event routes must be submitted to the BLM at least one month prior to the event date and will occur on designated routes only. (Map 4)
4. Events that occur during hunting season need to be preapproved.

Included in the Proposed Action for additional non-motorized events, is the Rule the Roost Triathlon. The triathlon is a run, bicycle, and paddle race in conjunction with Paddlefest Community event, held at the end of May. The run and bicycle portions of the race occur on BLM land. The first year for the event was monitored by the BLM in 2013. Monitoring concluded the event had few environmental impacts with less than 30 participants. The event achieved an acceptable compliance review.

The Western Pack Burro Race is included in the Proposed Action for non-motorized events. The proposed activity is day-use and could include up to 50 participants. The event will stage on private property and move onto the BLM for the race loop. Livestock will not be fed on public lands. Buena Vista has maintained an acceptable performance record for the pack burro race permit for over ten years.

The additional proposed running and bicycle events expect up to 60 participants during each event.

The following applies to all events:

Authority to issue SRP's is found in BLM SRP Handbook H-2930-1 and 43 CFR Part 2930.

Issuing an SRP is a discretionary action with final approval by the authorized officer.

Applications may be denied based upon factors such as non-compliance with land use plans or designations; a moratorium on permits issued as part of a planning process; the results of an environmental analysis; other resource values; an allocation system; public health and safety concerns; applicant's past performance; or the inability of the managing office to issue, manage, and monitor the proposed use.

Compliance with the standard stipulations for all permits is required. The permitted activity will be monitored by the BLM for adherence to the stipulations. Use of BLM public land is non-exclusive; designated routes in the area will be open and available to the public unless a temporary closure is deemed necessary for public safety. If a temporary closure is necessary, the permittee is responsible for notifying the public through news media and trail signs.

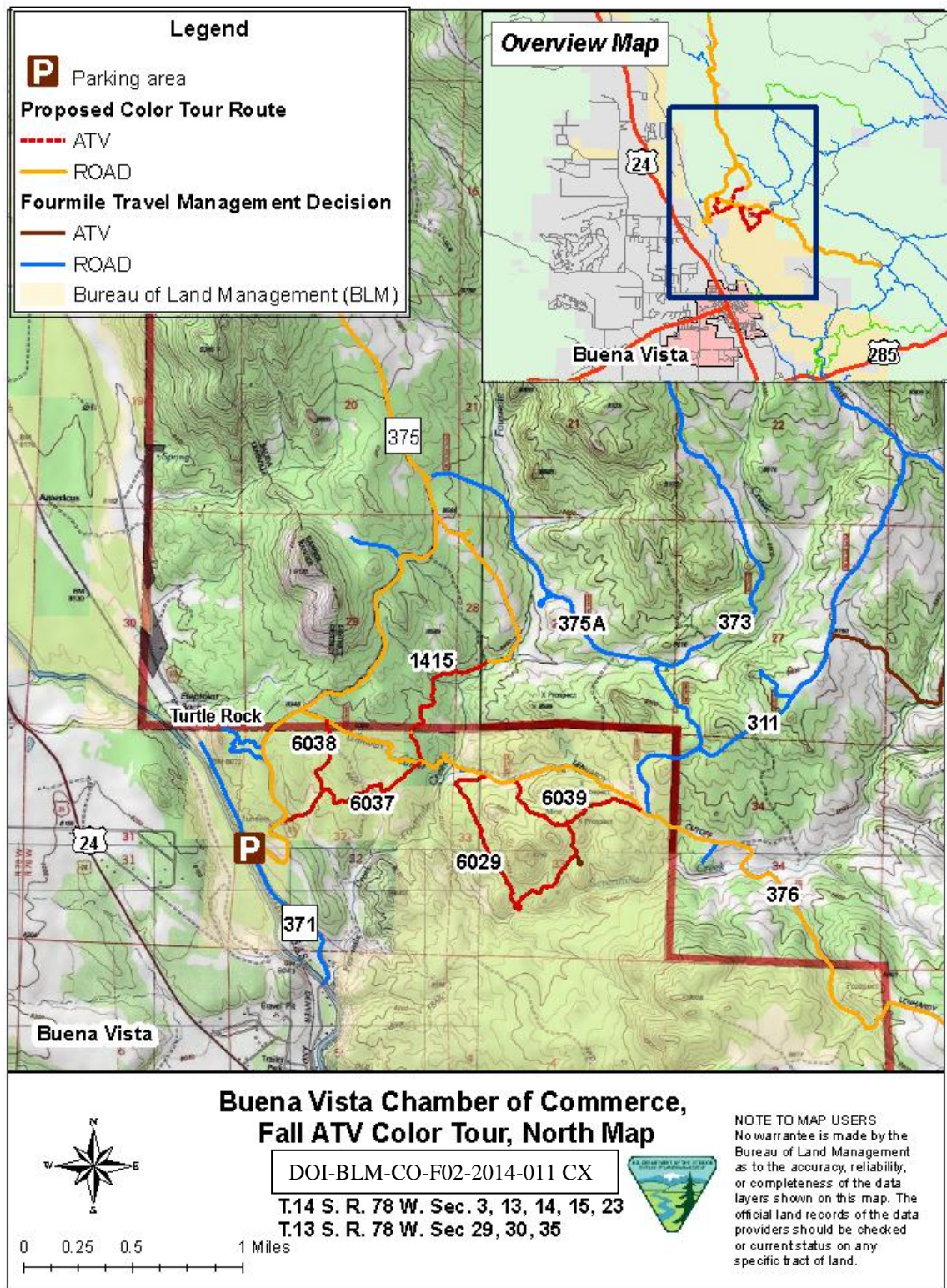
The event organizers are responsible for educating participants on the "Pack it in-Pack it out" philosophy, for trash removal. Participants will be encouraged to use restroom facilities at trailheads for human waste disposal. If away from adequate facilities, participants will be encouraged to practice "Leave No Trace" ethics to dig cat holes for human waste disposal.

For all of the competitive and commercial non-motorized events, volunteers will be placed at all road intersections to direct traffic and coordinate potential non-race interference. Technical or hazardous obstacles will be marked to alert participants. A communication plan will be in place for volunteers to contact dispatch by radio and/or cell phone. Course monitors will contact dispatch to request Emergency Medical Services in case of an emergency.

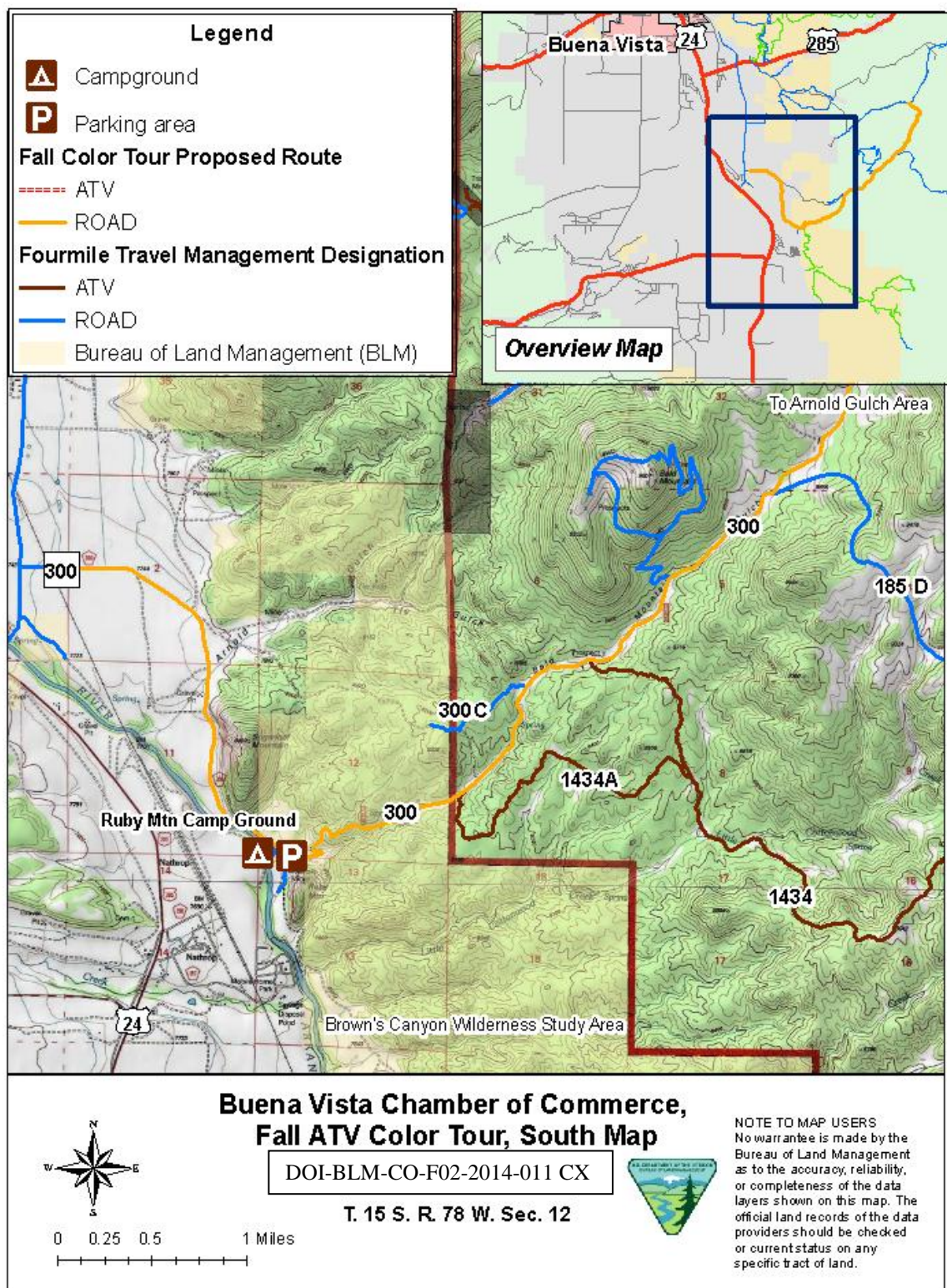
The Proposed Action would only authorize use on BLM public land. The applicant is responsible for obtaining signed agreements or permits with United States Forest Service (USFS), Fremont or Chaffee County, Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), State Highway patrol, and/or private property owners. At fee use areas, the applicant and/or participants are responsible for paying all applicable fees. The Proposed Action would allow commercial guided ATV tours, competitive running races, pack burro races, and mountain bike races on designated routes only, as defined in the Fourmile Travel Management Plan (TMP) and Arkansas River TMP.

Public Scoping was done in the form of a press release to local newspapers. Twenty-five comments were received supporting the addition of the proposed events in the Fourmile area. No negative comments were received.

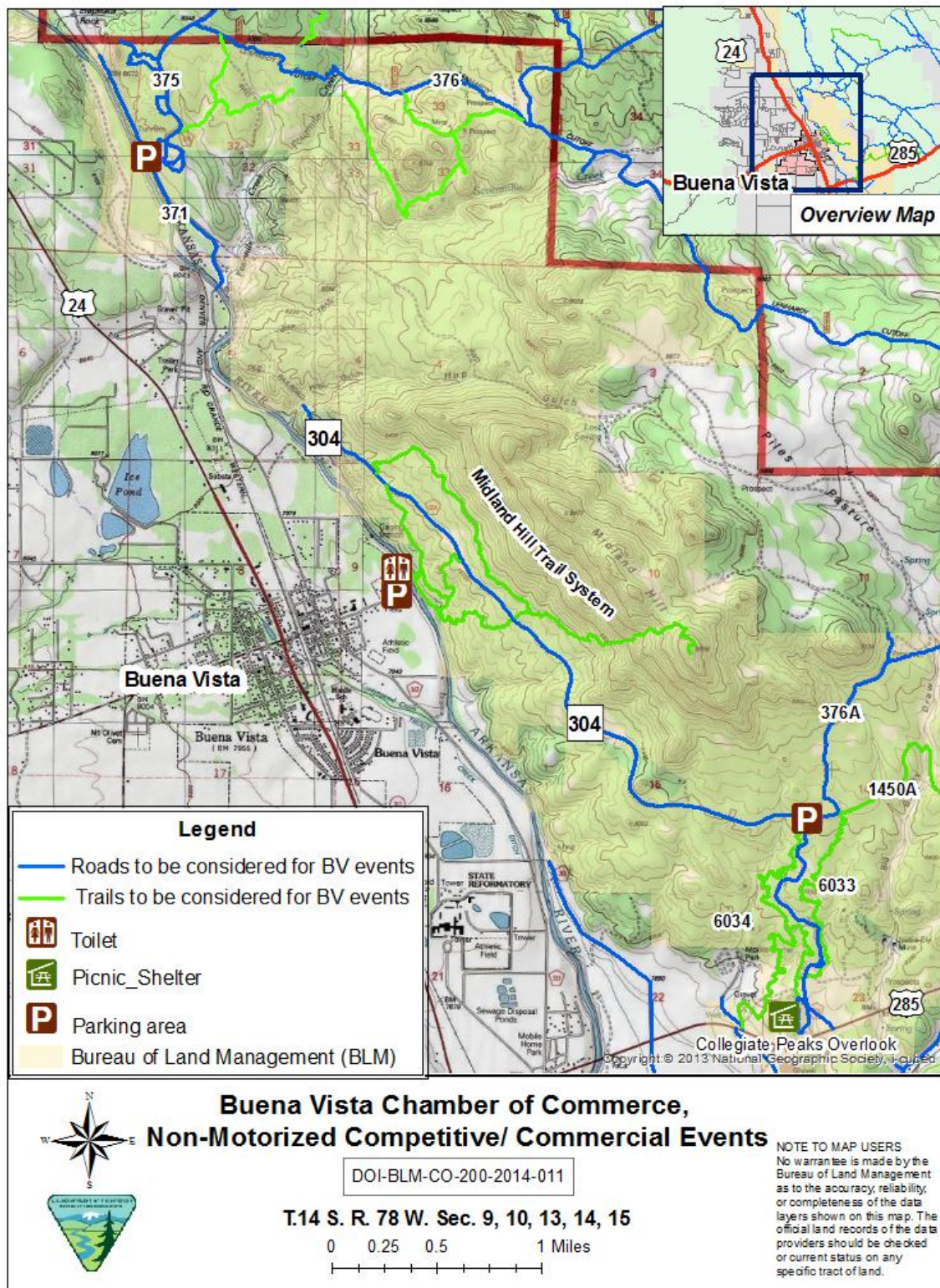
Map 1: Fall Color Tour Proposed Route, Fourmile, North



Map 2: Fall Color Tour Proposed Route, Fourmile South



Map 3: Buena Vista Non-Motorized Events proposed event location includes all designated routes on BLM:



PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 5/13/1996

Decision Number: 1-74, 1-82

Decision Language:

1-74 Partnerships will be developed with local and regional off-highway vehicle clubs/groups to assist in coordination and enhancing off-highway vehicle recreation opportunities.

1-82 Recreation will be managed to provide for: a variety of recreational opportunities and settings; additional opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, off-highway vehicle use, interpretation, and horseback riding; facility development will be accomplished to reduce user conflicts and to improve visitor health and safety.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11.9H (1). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X
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INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 2/24/2014
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 3/20/14
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	-----
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 02/18/2014
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 2/18/14
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 3/24/14
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 2/18/14
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	-----
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 3/3/14
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 2/25/2014
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	-----
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 2/15/14
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 5/1/14
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	-----
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	GDV, 04/22/2014
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	SC, 2/24/2014
Dennis Page	Acting Fire Management Officer	Fire	DP, 3/20/14

REMARKS:

Range Management: Inform applicant that livestock grazing is permitted on public lands in this area during the fall and winter periods.

Cultural Resources: Three historic properties are present in the area of potential effect (5CF354, 5CF370 and 5CF555). Two of the properties already function as roads, and the third is associated with an existing developed site. Two additional sites (5CF2751 and 5CF2915) and two isolated finds (5CF2944 and 5CF2945) were recorded during a recent inventory, but are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (see Report CR-RG-14-98 P). Because no new ground disturbance will be involved with the proposed undertaking, and the SRP will not involve any uses different than are imposed on the historic properties every day, there will be no adverse effect on them.

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The proposed action occurs along existing routes and trails resulting in no change to the disturbance footprint in the area. There are no records of any federally listed species or their preferred habitat within or near the project area. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to threatened or endangered species.

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: If the project involves oil or fuel usage, transfer or storage, an adequate spill kit and shovels are required to be onsite during project implementation. The project proponent will be responsible for adhering to all applicable local, State and Federal regulations in the event of a spill, which includes following the proper notification procedures in BLM's Spill Contingency Plan.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Janine Prout

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K.S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 5/7/14

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

/s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 5/7/14